

Adaptable Housing Roundtable 15 December 2016

BACKGROUND

On 15 December 2016, Standards Australia hosted a roundtable in Canberra to discuss whether Australian Standard AS 4299-1995 Adaptable housing should be revised, withdrawn or reconfirmed.

This followed the development of a proposal submitted jointly by the Australian Network on Universal Housing Design (ANUHD) and Rights and Inclusion Australia (RIA) which did not, at the time of consideration, have the requisite level of stakeholder support to proceed as a Standards Australia project.

DISCUSSIONS

There was broad agreement from attendees that the specifications contained in AS 4299-1995:

- Reflect contemporary practices as they were in 1995;
- In part, have been superseded by other specifications, guidelines and policy instruments;
- Are used by planning authorities in various ways to implement adaptable housing planning policy.

It was also acknowledged, broadly, that the principles of AS 4299-1995 remain current and relevant no matter what the next steps are with respect to the standard, or other solution to meet the needs of the sector.

Those in attendance noted the Communique released following the Building Ministers Forum held in Perth in December 2016, as it related to Ministers having further discussions on the costs and benefits of applying a minimum accessibility standard for private dwellings.

It was also acknowledged that any work to improve AS 4299-1995 should be done in the context of other initiatives and programs including Liveable Housing Australia (LHA) guidelines and their referencing in some state planning legislation (i.e. NSW SEPP Seniors and SEPP 65).

OUTCOMES

Those in attendance agreed to develop a matrix of suggested changes to AS 4299-1995, outside of the formal Standards Australia process, to identify specifications that:

- Duplicate other specifications contained in other standards, policy or other documents;
- Are no longer applicable to adaptable housing in Australia;
- Could be improved usefully to support adaptable housing in Australia.

It was also noted that the various terminologies used in Australia and overseas would be reviewed by the informal group and included in the matrix.

NEXT STEPS

Those in attendance agreed that a matrix would be completed by Standards Australia prior to 31 March 2017 and that the group would meet again in mid-April 2017 to consider the next steps including a project proposal being submitted to Standards Australia.

ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED

Australian Institute of Architects, Council on the Ageing, Home Modifications Australia, Housing Industry Association, Master Builders Australia, Property Council of Australia, Rights and Inclusion Australia.

Apologies were received from the Australian Building Codes Board and Liveable Housing Australia.